



Unveiling the depth of Satire in Abubakar Adams Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms*

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Abstract— Contemporary African writers have addressed their countries' social, political and economic problems using satire to crystallise the malaises and irregularities affecting their societies. Satire is seen as a tool for expressing their disillusionment on the burgeoning prevalence of political, economic, religious and social abnormalities in the dysfunctional setting of African countries. One of such African writers is Abubakar Adams Ibrahim who uses his novel, *Season of Crimson Blossoms* to expose not just the societal maladies but also the follies and ineptitudes of mankind, and religion hypocrisies. This study critically scrutinizes the place of satire in achieving the aforementioned in the writer's fictional rendering. Emphasis is laid on political irregularities, cultural dissonances and hypocrisies associated with religion and the effects they have on characters and the society at large. The groundwork for these are squeezed out of the psychological make-up of characters, characters' conversation with one another, actions and inactions of characters. The aforementioned will be considered using satire as a tool to demystify the aspects that the writer advocate for change. Inadvertently, in the study of satire as a tool for viewing a work of art, sociological approach or criticism is inevitable as a framework because the society that gave rise to the book must be thoroughly understood before satire can come in to advocate for social transformation and revitalization.



Keywords— Satire, African Writers, Societal ills, malaises, Political ills

I. INTRODUCTION

Season of Crimson Blossoms by Abubakar Adams Ibrahim has continued the trend of championing social causes which is quite synonymous with notable African writings. African writers are absolutely dedicated and intentional about utilizing the power of their pens to trigger social change, transformation and reformation. This justifies the reason why their works are replete with issues affecting their countries. They believe their writing should have some impact in changing the society they live for good.

It is important to note that most early African literature fiction and non-fiction works drew their strength and subject matter from the process of colonization and the fight for independence. During the colonial era, the social reality of this era was properly documented and condemned in the works produced in the era. There was an incarnation of a

dominant tendency of reaction against colonialism. The consciousness of writers at this period was to 'write back' to the Europeans who viewed them and their cultures as barbaric. There was a direct reaction against the notion of primitiveness and barbarism. However, the warped portraiture of African characters, society and environment propelled this era and the desire to correct these misrepresentations. They were consumed with creating social and cultural awareness about Africans.

As noted by Helen Chukwuma (2010); The subject matter of the African novel is realistic and socially-conditioned". To talk about African novels is to talk about "historical context in terms of the reality that has shaped and continues to shape the consciousness of the writers and their responses in the novels they write." (12)

These responses vary due to so many factors and issues affecting different geographical territories in Africa. Helen Chukwuma observed; While the Anglophone writers wrote about their home culture and life before the advent of the whiteman as a way of reclaiming their identity... Francophone writers were combating the assimilation policy of the French colonialists by introducing the political and cultural movement of Negritude in the thirties.(12)

Thus far, it has been established that most African novels are socially-conditioned. That is, they take their roots and thematic thrusts from societal issues. Contemporary writers gingerly followed the trend they met and resorted to using their works to ignite change. The preoccupations shifted from fighting against colonialism and fighting for independence to corruption, socio-political maladies and irregularities. The preservation and awareness of cultural and national identity was no longer the subject matter, rather the current happenings that realised social reality. Hence, since African writers are not one to keep mute about wrong happenings in their society, it is expected that beyond the aesthetic value of an African work, it should attempt to address some issues. African literature has been used overtime as a weapon of social transformation, reformation and societal change. The impact of African literature in the current shape of Africa States is very significant. Through works of literature, consciousness is quickened and awareness about so many wrong activities are exposed with the main motive of restructuring them.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Abubakar Adams Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms* will serve as the primary text and in achieving a better understanding and prognosis, there will be a close and in-depth reading of the novel and there will be an interrogation of the novel's narratives, its themes, characters and socio-historical context. In this research study, textual evidence has taken precedence over speculations. Interviews granted by the author will be thoroughly used and incorporated in this study which will lead to an overall satisfactory conclusion rather than speculations.

Nevertheless, this will not dissipate the place of secondary materials and sources of collecting information for this essay shall include the use of textbooks, novels, newspapers, fiction and non-fiction, magazine, dramas, critical articles and essays, journals and various literary pieces.

III. WHAT IS SATIRE?

The word satire originated from the Latin word, *satur* which means 'full' and its subsequent phrase *Lanx satura* which

means 'a full dish of various kinds of fruits'. Satire has been defined by many scholars differently but one feature that remains constant through the numerous definitions would be the unflinching focus satire gives to unsatisfactory attitudes, beliefs, practices and ills in the society. Satire is a genre of literature, and sometimes graphic and performing arts, in which vices, follies, abuses and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government or society itself into improvement. (Wikipedia).

LeBoeuf Megan (2007:1) aptly describes satire as the exposure of "deficiencies in human behaviours and social issues...(8). Following this trajectory, we see that satire has a burning goal which is to expose that which is not acceptable and right. One important reason why satire is widely accepted and used in different societies is the protection of the satirist from culpability from criticism. This is made possible because satire does not state things directly, rather things are implied. Satire provides an avenue for its users through which they can say everything without giving offences.

Abioye Taiwo (2009:138) asserts that; An object is criticized because it falls short of some standard which the critic desires it should reach. The correct purpose, which is basic in every satirical text is expressed through a critical tone, which ridicules or otherwise attacks those conditions needing reformation in the opinion of the satirist.(3). This was also affirmed by Raj Kishor Singh (2012:68), that the improvement of mankind and humanity triggers the criticism of human's "follies and foibles"(9). In other words, satire is governed by a purpose which is the betterment of humanity and in achieving this, "wit, humor, irony, exaggeration and ridicule" are employed, Raj Kishor Singh.(9)

As seen above, satire does not point towards a person that is one of the main unique feature and characteristics of satire. The intended person does not feel threatened directly, and this is great because those who have the intent of indulging in those shortcomings are properly discouraged before exhibiting it. The role of satire is to ridicule or criticise those vices in the society which the writer feels need improvement.

Raj Kishore Singh also believes that satire is a potent tool for national development; What better tool than satire exists for voicing criticisms in those unstable times? Satire is more alive today than ever before, finding outlets in literature, television, the internet, comics and cartoons. Messages that would be ignored or punished if overtly declared are reaching millions of people in satirical form, and making a real difference. It may be the most powerful tool that critics

have to get their opinions out into the world" Raj Kishor Singh(9).

If satire had not proven to be a potent tool, it would have seen a great decline in its usage but because it reaches out to both ends, it's very valid. It's important to note that what necessitates satire is the growing number of issues which are affecting citizen's lives and national development and yet show no sign of coming to an end.

Sharing the same view, Iwuchukwu (2009:20) asserts that; Any literary work which holds up a society to ridicule or shows the foolishness or weakness of an idea or custom and towards its attitude of amusement, contempt or scorn is called a satire (15). This definition has been described as profoundly misleading, however, this shouldn't come off as a surprise because just like literature, there is scarcely any definition that can fully satisfy the complexities of satire. Its versatility also buttresses that because satire is not restricted to literary renderings only, even in human communication and interaction, satire abides there. Satire has been seen by some scholars as the "mocking tone or spirit". This made its presence felt in virtually every human interaction such as political debates, sermons, talks, movies, television, internet, comics, cartoons, artwork and paintings.

David Worcester argues that satire is criticism, whether subtle or overt. This is how he puts it in *The Art of Satire*; the content of satire is criticism and criticism may be uttered as direct rebuke or as impersonal logic. Innumerable intermediate stages, by combining emotion and intellect in different proportions, lead from one pole of blind human feeling to the opposite pole of divine or inch man attachment. The spectrum analysis of satire runs from the red of invective at one end to the violet or the most delicate irony on the other. (14). In other words, satire is criticism and criticism can come in many ways, ranging from direct confrontation to indirect or impersonal logic yet satire can come in many ways, ranging from direct confrontation to indirect or impersonal logic yet satire can be made more artistic or aesthetic and consequently subtle by the use of style.

As stated by Worcester; In the formation of any kind of satire, there are two steps. The author first evolves a criticism of conducts ordinarily human conduct but occasionally divine-then he contrives ways of making his readers comprehend or remember that criticism and adopt it as their own. Without Style and literary form, his message would be incomprehensible without wit and compression, it would not be memorable, without high mindedness, it would not 'come to men's business and bosoms.'(14).

The connection between criticism and style cannot be denied, according to Worcester because the writer will always make his readers understand and comprehend his

message and the method a writer does this is style. Style varies based on what a reader intends to achieve and he's at liberty to discern the one that will prove to be more effective and achieve his intended result. Style is basically the manner in which criticism is relayed. Intricately linked to satire is style because the variations found in satire are induced due to style, the style that a writer chose to communicate to his readers.

To my mind, satire is an escape weapon that allows a satirist to shoot at a target without being caught or apprehended. To actualise that, a satirist must persuade his readers effectively in order to sell his point or ideas to them. Therefore, satire must be convincing enough, so that the reader will perceive a situation the very way the satirist sees it. Hence, the satirist must be skillful in his use of language to 'get' his audience.

IV. THE THRUST OF SATIRE IN THE BOOK

4.1 Socio-cultural satire.

After careful study of the book, it can be deduced that the text, *Season of Crimson Blossoms* took its major root from the cultures, traditions, norms and beliefs of the northern society which the writer intends to improve. Various elements of satire like irony, contrast, sarcasm, scorn, ridicule are employed to satirise shortcomings, follies and wrong orientation with the intent of improvement and social reformation. To make this analysis coherent, it shall be divided into two: narrative analysis and thematic analysis.

4.1.1 Narrative Analysis

In the novel, there are a lot of obvious instances of satirical statements that were made to change the psyches of the northern society on various issues. Extracts that correctly depict this objective will be highlighted, foregrounded and analysed. The following aspects of the contemporary life in Northern Nigeria are tactfully ridiculed with a view to re-awakening new social consciousness:

4. 1.1.1 Fashion

The latest and fashion sense of the present generation is satirised in the novel. The old tradition was decent and appropriate clothing but unfortunately, this trend has been adjusted with a huge accepted berth. Outfits that are in vogue are those that barely cover one's nakedness and the exposure of private organs has become the order of the day. Using the conversation between, Binta and her granddaughter, we see the writer's mind.

"Come, wipe off that silly lipstick. It makes you look ill and

your uniform is too tight around the hips. You should be ashamed wearing it so tight"

Fa'iza replied her grandmother

"Ashamed? But Hajiya, this is the fashion now. You are so

old school, wallahi, you don't know anything about fashion

anymore" pg 4.

This scenario chronicles the daily struggles faced by parents concerning their children, particularly young adults. Teenage years are unforgettable for many people because they represent their transition from childhood to adulthood. It's a period where many teenagers desire to feel heard, approved and follow the trend of their peers. We see the manifestation of this in the above excerpts where Faiza accused Binta of being ignorant of the current 'fashion'. It is important to note that change is constant and to a very large extent needed for development. Fashion styles that were in vogue in the late sixties are outdated in this present 21st century.

Despite the change in fashion wears, shoes and outfits, there are some principles of dressing that must never change or go into extinction. Especially, the principle of propriety and shamefacedness which guided the older generation. Binta was confronting her granddaughter of her not being ashamed of her skirt being so tight at the hip side because she knew during her heydays, shame wouldn't allow her to put such on. This short conversation shows the different perspectives where both ladies were talking from. Binta, being elderly knows the traditions of appropriateness and decency when it comes to fashion while Fa'iza, the fifteen years old teenager was in tune with the present fashion. Through the use of ridicule, the author uses the scenario to call attention to the recent fashion decadence that is dominant not only in the northern society, but also the world at large.

4.1.1.2 Kunya.

This is the socially prescribed modesty that restricts a mother from calling her first child by his/her name or even show open affection or acknowledgment. This northern custom forbids open expression of love to a mother's first child. Binta, with her primordial attachment to ancient custom and tradition adheres to this rule and rather call Yaro, her first child 'Boy' instead of his real name. Even when she talked about him briefly, it felt like a sacrilege, a taboo.

"Do you think of him sometimes?"

"Munkaila?"

"The other one"

"Yaro?" Pg.13

The conversation between Binta and Hadiza, her daughter shocked her to the bone marrow because her mother had never made any reference to Yaro, even after his death. So strange was their conversation that when Hadiza recounted it to Munkaila, her elder brother, his countenance immediately changed. It was like a topic that must never be broached. During the conversation, Binta still couldn't bring herself to mention his name. It shows the importance attached to this custom.

However, the author through the use of contrast, is trying to reverse this age-long tradition that has caused so many untold hardships for family and even the society at large. Using Hadiza to condemn and break free from the shackles of the tradition by openly showing affection to Kabir, her son. Binta envied this liberty and freedom and inquired,

"Don't you ever feel...strange calling him like that? By his name?"

Your first son?"

"Hajiya, this is the twenty-first century. I shall not subject myself

and my child to the shackles of the old ways like you did" Pg.57

In advance of AfricaWrites 2015, Abubakar Adams Ibrahim who happens to be the festival guest talks to AfricanWrites's author Emma Shercliff about a lot about his novel. In the interview, he said,

"...My step-mom had a similar relationship with her mom[to that of

Binta, the main character in the novel], who because of culture and

tradition, is not supposed to acknowledge her daughter. So, she

treated her like a stranger, she never mentioned her name, she never

talked to her directly and that, that was the norm. And it really affected

her because sometimes there were things she wanted to talk to her

mother about but she never had the opportunity of doing that...

And I thought, you know it's doing a lot of damage to people and to the

way they relate with their children and nobody's acknowledging that."

The author's stepmother made a conscious effort to call her first son by name publicly and she relates well with her children through her brutal defiance.

Kunya is not only damaging but brutal to the children who yearn to be loved, cherished, adorned and treated specially. It's quite funny that the arrival of first child is always laced with eager anticipation but with the practice of Kunya, the affection that is supposed to be given to such child is terminated. At childhood, a child needs motherly love, they need it so much that they can't survive adequately without such. The writer satirises this act or custom in the northern part of Nigeria because of its damaging effect. Instead of giving birth and treating the innocent child like an unwanted being, they shouldn't give birth either.

Kunya also brings about discorded relationship between mothers and their offsprings. A child that is not acknowledged by his/her mothers can't open up about things that are troubling him/her to such mother. This manifestation could be seen in the way Yaro relates to Binta. Yaro's case was that of an innocent young boy with great reverence for his mother who wouldn't show or express any affection to him. The outcome was that he sought for love, affection and warmth from the wrong set of people (young boys) who made him feel at home, showered him with love in their own little way and he was eventually killed. If Yaro had been acknowledged by his mother, the desire of joining bad gangs might not occur to him, but because he wants to be loved, he strayed to the wrong set of people.

Infact, so horrible is the northern custom that when Yaro's father flogged him mercilessly over a little offence, Binta couldn't stop him or pleaded her husband to stop but rather she focuses on her cooking where she pounded yam with a great aloofness, it was their Yoruba neighbour that rushed in to rescue Yaro. Welts shone brightly on Yaro's back and Binta snuck out at night to apply medicine to his back with accurate secrecy of not being seen. Yaro was surprised and cried while Binta joined and out of accumulated love called Yaro by his name for the first time.

Hadiza, who had observed the entire proceedings of Kunya from a very little age, vowed not to subject her children to such hostility in the name of tradition. She defiantly reversed the customs for a better relationship with her children, which was what the writer's stepmother did too. Hence, the writer is beckoning on young mothers to disregard this destroying and horrible custom through sheer defiance to create a long-lasting relationship with their children.

Through contrast, the writer tries to reverse this cultural attitude that has been instilled in northern women. Even, Binta admitted the fact that some women do not acknowledge their second or third born. Hadiza, refused to be restrained by the tradition of the old ways. Unfortunately, this despicable act is still in vogue in the northern society.

The writer suggests a reversal of this tradition through the present-day mothers and by encouraging them to tread the path of Hadiza by showing love, care and affection to their first child.

4.1.1.3 Education.

Despite the uncertainty that comes with education in our contemporary age, its importance cannot be overemphasised in an individual's life. Education has a way of curbing one's innate excesses and it also has a way of shaping and moulding one's thoughts in the right direction. Hence, monetary gain of going to school should be de-emphasised and the acquisition of knowledge should be deliberately emphasised. The place of education in the novel cannot be denied. Great emphasis was placed on it. Reza, the main character in the novel was expelled out of school for dealing in drugs and even after ten years, disdained going back to school because, according to him, he has 'too much metal in my head, too many fights, too much weed, too much...stupidity'

Not even Binta's entreaties of going back to school after getting married could persuade him.

"What purpose is there in going to school if not to make money?"

"It is to get an education"

"And what use is an education without money?"

"Money isn't everything, you know"

"You understand, all these people going to school, it's because they

want to become big men someday. Look at Bulama with his useless

diploma, he can't even feed his wife" Pg 189.

The above conversation between Binta and Reza is both disheartening and discouraging. Through the voice of Binta, the writer was able to pass the message that the end-result of education should not be in material gain. Money shouldn't be the main motive for getting education but for the purpose of being educated, the purpose of thinking correctly and having a developed way of seeing things. Simply put, the end-result of getting education should be in the rational perspective of viewing everything that goes on around one. In our contemporary world, youths are constantly disregarding degree, education and higher institution for internet fraud which has become the norm of the society. They believe that the only usefulness of education is to get money and since they are getting the money through dubious means, education is not needed.

The writer aspires to correct this prevailing societal mentality because everybody can earn a decent income, but not everybody can make a reasonable contribution to

improve the society which such lives in. This is the significance of education and it spans beyond the certificate. Education equips one to contribute to economic growth and development and helps to improve the quality of life and living. It also equips one with the spirit of competitiveness which is a vital tool for the societal's growth.

Reza was preoccupied with his weed business, running errands and doing dirty works for a politician, Senator Buba. It is crucial to note here that money got from these sources are short-lived but he refused going back to school and not even the registration for Waec examination which Binta paid for him could change his mind.

He retorted sarcastically,

"Have you seen how many graduates there are running around

with their silly ties and stupid file-holders looking for jobs?

People are just wasting their time when they could have been

doing something else with their lives" Pg 190.

However, it is quite ironical that someone who mocked and scorned education could ever spend a dime and encourage someone else to get an education. At a point in the novel, Reza painfully remember that his life(without education) has been a waste, with nothing meaningful to make out of it and while handing over some money to Sani Scholar, an ambitious seventeen years old who wanted to be a doctor before working for him, he admitted some things.

"Here, take this. Go and register for the exam, you understand

You will be useful to your mother that way" Pg 302

The shock on Sani Scholar prompted Reza's next statement,

"Scholar, don't be like me. Go to school. Make something of

of your life. Don't let someone else mess with your head, you

understand? Now, get out of here." Pg 302

Reza himself admitted that his head has been messed up. When he first thought about the idea of going back to school, he brought it before Senator, who discouraged him out of his selfish political objectives by recounting sad tales of graduates who had no job.

"You are doing better than them who spent all those years in school,

all that money gone, all that time wasted, for what? That is why I think

young people like you who are entrepreneurs, who have business acumen,

should not waste your lives chasing illusions..." Pg. 178

It is important to note that money got through ill means can never sustain a man, hence youth who condenses education at the expense of internet fraud are simply ignorant of the days ahead.

4.1.1.4 Adventures in sex-life

It is a known fact that the north of Nigeria is overly conservative when it comes to sexual activities. This accounts for why we see little representation of such in their literature. The northerners are very reserved when it comes to sex and love-making. The case of pleasure and sex in the North is an in-built following to a certain doctrine or custom which most members of the community(women) have nothing to say about. Contrary to the popular opinion that this lifestyle is at home with the Northerners, the novel depicts something contrary to that. The Northern society is strictly patriarchal, that is a system that is run by males, rather than females. This, coupled with the 'forced' conservatism of sex has made any open discussion of sex a taboo.

The females in this society are expected to be modest, and never show their sexual desires outwardly or make it known even to their husband. This act is grossly satirised by the author as this could be seen in the novel when Binta, who wanted a different sex life with her husband but unfortunately the society does not permit deviation from the the accepted couple's sex life; the conventionals. Worst still, she couldn't bring herself to tell her husband and when she depicts it in her actions, she was brutally rebuked by her husband. Through the marriage counsellor, Dijen Tsamiya, the author exposes the age-long belief and tradition about sex.

"See, how you look into my eyeballs. Don't look your husband in the eyes

like that, especially when you are doing it. Don't look at him down there.

And don't let him look at you there, either if you don't want to have

impious offering"

"And don't go throwing yourself at him. You wouldn't want him thinking

you are a wanton little devil now, would you?"

In other words, a woman must not demand for sex when she needs it. Binta wanted a different sex life and when she tried to practise what had been eating her up, she was

condemned by her husband in a brutal way, "What the hell are you doing?"

The author condemns the act of repressing women and their innate sexual desires and believes women should be able to express their desires and fantasies and no society should restrain them. It is important to know that human beings are sexual beings and sex is a vital aspect of marriage that brings intimacy, love and oneness between couple. Hence, for something as vital as this, each parties concerned should have a say about when to have it or when not to have it, how to go about it, how not to go about it and the likes. Discussions should thrash out those questions because sexual intercourse is not for individual's gratification but for dual enjoyment. Concession should be reached from both parties involved and not just the needs and desires of a particular individual(males) should be given precedence to because the females also have active roles to play.

The novel satirises the traditional stereotype that a woman should not express or show her sexual desires openly. This has caused so many damages to the Northerner, especially women as seen in Binta who has to express or satisfy her innate sexual desires with Reza. It is quite possible that such act would have been avoided if she had been thoroughly satisfied during her husband's lifetime.

The society is implored to take into consideration, the women's innate sexual desires because they are humans with equal right to life, sex and everything that pertains to them. Brutal objectification of the female folks should be reconsidered because they are not for the men's gratification and delight only. They also need to be gratified and delighted.

Also, emphasis should not be laid on the male counterparts only, it should be shared across both genders. The right a man has to ask his wife for sex should be mutual and not one-sided, because if a man feels he doesn't need his wife's opinion on sex-related matter, he should gratify himself, excluding the activities of his wife.

The writer is trying to dig out the heavy thrust and culture of silence from the Northern society. In an interview with AfricanWords, the author when asked about having a reader in mind when writing said,

"...sometimes, because of the complexities involved in the story

and narration, especially when it explores issues that have to do

with culture, you have to be conscious of what you are doing. Do

you want to provoke people or provoke thoughts or provoke even

a revolt or something against the norm or the culture? So, you have

to sort out your priorities and figure out exactly what you want to

achieve with your story"

Going by what he has done so far in his novel, it is obvious his intent is to provoke thoughts about Northern customs especially their conservative sex life and he allows his readers to chew on the reason why women cannot demand for sex and the males can do that and the damage that has incurred to his society. He himself explaining sexual activities in details in the book was a bold move on his part as Northern writers consider this a sacrilege. Hence, if the writer can choose to break the shackles of old traditions that might prevent him from giving the best to his readers, Northern women can also break free from any traditional stereotypes.

At Madrasa, Binta has to feign interest in a pair of slippers but her major interest was in the booster pills and vaginal creams and ointments that was displayed on the table for sale. As quoted, "women with husbands contemplated these, unscrewing the lids and sniffing the contents" pg 133. Binta wanted to check out those booster creams but because she has no husband, she couldn't. By default, widows are culturally restrained, not even from buying alone but also from checking it out. The writer tries to reverse this status quo that is dominant in the north.

4.1.1.5 Drug and Drug Abuse.

Despite the obvious emphasis of drugs like weed, joint, mixtures, tramol, solution and other assorted mixtures, they are massively condemned in the novel. The author through the voice of some characters spoke on drug abuse.

"You know, you people are just killing yourself with all these

useless chemicals you consume..." Pg 173.

Youths under the influence of drugs are prone to several misbehaviours, ill-mannerisms and outspoken rebellion. Seventy percent of youths have been wrongly exposed to drugs and many have become so addicted to it, such that leaving it becomes not only an arduous task but an impossible one. In the novel, we see Reza who not only consume drugs but also sell them. The writer's disposition to this mind-altering act is very negative as he uses some characters like Binta and Senator Makurdi to vehemently oppose the act. Although, it was implied humorously, we see the overtone of slight mockery in the sentence made by Senator Buba to Reza. The form of satire used here is the Horatian which condemn ills with humor.

The heavy use and reliance on drug has become the trend for youths of this generation and this has triggered so many social vices like rape, gang-rape, illegal acts like stealing, picking fights and disrespect to elders. Drug affects one's psychological state and it paves way for all these vices to have full manifestation in the society.

Another scenario where drug abuse was condemned was when Binta found out that her son was smoking right under her nose. She angrily addressed him for smoking his life away while others are praying in the mosque. This is to say that the act of consuming drugs must be condemned in the society and not encouraged.

"Under my roof, Yaro? Is this what you want to teach your brother

You useless boy! Men are at the mosque praying while you are

here smoking your useless life away under my roof!" Pg. 174

Obviously, drug abuse was not condoned, rather it was condemned. Through the author's depiction of youths who are so addicted to smoking and drug abuse, one could see that it affects their way of thinking. The author even added, 'A life seen through cannabis fumes' which means excessive consumption of drugs has a way of influencing one's thoughts and actions.

4.1.1.6 Society's mode of confrontation

Another important aspect that was satirised was the way society handles issues which always leads to zero impact. The norms, cultures, values, tradition, customs, doctrines and societal's lifestyle are what guide a particular community. By default, every member of a particular community is socially-conditioned to a robotic followership to these ways of life. Hence, deviation from these long-held tradition are highly frowned upon and seen as rebellious act because of the in-built self-censorship mechanism which the society has been operating under. A widower in the Northern society is not expected to be in a sexual rendezvous with a guy half her age. If she wants to marry, that is fine but a mere affair is not allowed. When Binta broke the society norms, there was confrontation from various angles. Binta's affair with Reza sparked some controversies in her immediate society. Expectations were in place and her deviation from the societal expectations were deeply frowned upon.

Now, the mode of confrontation was what was satirised. Members of the society which she belongs to jumped hard at her and made her feel inferior through the use of harsh words and comments, bickering and the likes. Worst still, this type of confrontation was not direct to say the least.

For instance,

"See how people turn saints overnight. They don't realise that you

need to come to God with a pure heart before he answers your prayers"

And also,

"Imagine all these shameless sugar mummies running after young

boys, taking them to hotels and doing iskanci with them" Pg. 274

The surprising part is the fact that these comments were made right in Binta's presence making her feel depressed, embarrassed and ashamed. Direct and constructive confrontation was not employed but rather a destructive form of confrontation. It was obvious from the novel that such was not effective and couldn't bring her to change. But the author through the voice of Ustaz Nura, Binta's Madrasa teacher shows a better way of handling issues like this. Through the use of contrast as a satirical technique, we saw the most effective and efficient way of handling issues like this. Constructive criticism that was employed by Ustaz Nuru was able to provoke a change in Binta's heart.

Ustaz Nura heard about Binta's affair with Reza but went about it in a very civilized manner instead of harsh confrontation that speaks condemnation to the soul. He made her to understand that he believed nothing of the filthy rumours. With the right words, Binta was shedding sincere tears out of personal conviction. Ustaz Nura noticed it and said,

"Masha Allah, Hajiya Binta, I hope these tears are cleansing

your heart. Whatever you have done, or not, you will find

Allah, most forgiving and most merciful. Repent and you

find his arms open to receive you." Pg.306

The best way to confront deviation in the society is definitely not through harsh words as seen because it could only make the victim feel isolated and inferior without igniting a change. Hence, it should be avoided. Nigerian societies should tread the path of Ustaz Nuru when it comes to handling issues like this because it has been proven to bring in great result without condemning the victim involved.

4.1.1.7 Cultural Rigidity

In following societal traditions and customs as described above, one should endeavour not to get lost with it. There should be room for openness and proper thought before acting. Commitment and adherence to these traditions

should be rational and not trigger an irrational act from us. This was actually manifested when Munkaila out of sheer devotedness to culture broke into a fight with Reza. He was trying to defend his societal legacy, his father's legacy and even his mother's legacy. We should know that his death could have been avoided if a proper discussion had been tabled with his mother, making her to understand why she can't be in an affair with Reza, due to her position in the society and how detrimental that could be to her children and her grandchildren who are looking up to her for guidance, counselling and advice, but he broke into a fight and ended up being killed. Hence, the author is trying to say that culture should not make us do things arbitrarily. He encourages openness before acting, flexibility with cultural beliefs and how rigidity to society customs and traditions should not overwhelm our sense of reasoning and the likes. Munkaila's death was just the aftermath of rash decision and action.

4.1.2 Thematic Analysis

In this section, we shall be looking at the themes that permeate the novel and the message the writer wishes to pass through them. It is important to know that the themes in the novel satirize or speak to a particular attitude.

4.1.2.1 War

Central to the novel is the political riot of Jos and its devastating effect on victims. Fa'iza, Binta's granddaughter suffered the most from the war. Through her, we see the raw effect of political war depicted by always getting traumatized at the sight of blood and meat. We saw how the effects of war have no respect for age, gender or one's achievement. In the novel, the trauma was so strange that her sister, Hureira thought she was possessed by demon and djinns. Even her close relatives couldn't understand her plight. She battled everything by herself. In an interview with Elizabeth Olaoye, the writer was asked how the trauma theory explains Faiza's predicament but seems to repudiate the seeming superstitious aspects of genies, he said,

"I have said before that my point of interest is not necessarily in the

proof of their existence, not of djinns or other supernatural beings

but in interrogation of peoples' beliefs in their existence and how

they act and behave as a result of these beliefs. I am not trying to

prove their existence. I am only trying to mirror how people behave

because of the belief they have or don't have about these things.

Are there logical explanations of strange occurrences? Yes, sometimes

there are. Sometimes, there aren't...Does the constant stream of assorted

violence that people here are subjected to have an impact on their psyche?

Yes. They may be mentally stronger but they do suffer, a lot and the sooner

we acknowledge this; the better"

In faiza's case, there was an explanation, what she has witnessed in the past drove her to that junction. At a point, she struggles to remember the face of her brother Jamilu by drawing some sketches and regardless of how much she tries, she couldn't get his face. Hence, she keeps shedding paper after the attempt of trying to sketch their faces on the paper fails. This happened because she witnessed the gory scene of the bloody massacre of her father and Jamilu. The author uses the plight of the poor girl to satirize war in its entirety because its effects can never be fully eradicated.

Also, her failed attempts at sketching her brother's face was literally taken as a manifestation of how society wants us to think irrationally. The author wants us to look at things rationally and seek for a logical explanation for strange occurrences before veering into the spiritual realm because some things are not really associated with spirits, demons and djinns, but they might be trigger out of past failures, experiences and mistakes.

Another effect of war in the novel could be seen in the life of Binta who had to leave Jos where she had spent the early years of her life, but had to go to Abuja for safety. We need to understand her dilemma because for someone who had grew up in a place, leaving all her properties, friends and family and migrating to another place is not easy. Hence, by emphasising the effects of war, the author consciously satirises it.

4.1.2.2 Love.

Another theme in the novel can be traced to mutual emotions and feelings. Human beings have the tendency to love others and desire to be loved in return. Despite this innate desire, it is extremely important that we channel our emotions within the right context to avoid tragedies. Binta's affair with Reza ignited a lot of reactions from her immediate environment and it had to be done with utmost secrecy. Whenever Reza wants to visit her, he has to walk twice or thrice before approaching Binta's house. Now, the writer though fully aware of the need to feel love was able to capture and imagine the likely consequences of such adventure. Hadiza, at the beginning of the novel admitted that her mother was lonely. The writer satirizes this improper affair and predicts the likely consequences. Binta

was a respected widow but that respect dissipated quickly the moment she started her illicit affair with Reza. Fa'iza's friends who saw Binta with Reza disregarded her softly in their greetings to her.

She also lost her respect amidst her contemporaries and colleagues. Young women who were far beneath her talked to her out of contempt. If Binta had married Alhaji Buba in the proper way expected of her, the indignation and lack of respect that shadowed her would have been averted. Another consequence of Binta's improper and illicit affair was the tragic death of her son, Munkaila. By capturing the likely consequences, the writer was able to satirise this act in the society.

4.1.2.3 Political Satire

This was greatly addressed in the novel. The unacceptable and oppressive practices of political leaders were highlighted through scorn, ridicule and sheer contempt. The filthiness of politics was also exposed and condemned.

4.1.2.4 Bad Leadership.

Through the use of ridicule, the author satirises bad leadership in Nigeria. In the novel, the oppressive practices that are perpetuated by political leaders were emphasised. A very key conversation to the realisation of this was when Sadiya came to visit her mother-in-law, Binta.

"I hear the queues are back at the stations"

"Back? They never left"

"And we produce oil in this country, saboda, Allah fa!"

"Bad leadership, that's all"

Speaking with UbuntuFm on bad leadership, the author said,

"...These are people who inherited the flawed colonial structure that

Nigeria was established on, not as a country but as a business enter-

prize for Britain. They inherited that system and as nationalists instead

of modelling the system and fashioning Nigeria into a country, they

maintained the status quo and continued running as a colonial outpost

that benefits only them and their families and cronies. The same men

who started the Nigerian civil war in their twenties and thirties are still

running the country today in their seventies and eighties and have no

intention of stepping aside."

The writer's thought could be seen in his book and could be related to. Bad leadership has ruined Nigeria. To be precise, a country that is blessed with natural resources and mineral resources is still underdeveloped as a result of bad governance and sheer greediness of political leaders. In the novel, we saw Senator Makurdi whose son was pleading with his father to sponsor his one-week trip to Spain to learn a language because he was bored. Despite the weak resistance, his father agreed and we have citizens who could barely feed themselves even in his jurisdiction.

Hence, the present set of politicians that we have are just there for themselves, their families and to represent their selfish interests. The annoying fact is that they love what they have achieved, that they kept going back to contest regardless of their age or the money acquired. In the novel, we could also see the despicable state of a country like Nigeria, that produces oil but lacks fuel at the station. For a country that produces oil, there should not be scarcity of fuel. It shouldn't be heard of but ironically that is the present case of the country. Such country should be able to sell oil to its citizens at a little price but Nigerians cannot even benefit from the fact that oil is being produced in their country. Just as the writer opined in UbuntuFm's interview, the present and past leaders of the country see the country as a business enterprise, not as a country with expectant citizen but as a business enterprise that must be scooped of her riches as much as possible, without fear or remorse.

Through the use of ridicule, scorn and sarcasm, we saw what the author is trying to say about bad leadership and the expectations which the citizens have. Ordinarily, an oil-producing country should naturally have abundance but ironically, what we have is scarcity of that which we produce because of political leaders' selfish objectives and motives.

Another popular notion that was satirised by the writer is the dependence and confidence attached to some leaders. Most African states are deep in the dilemma of bad leaders because political leaders do not see their citizen as anything, rather the focus is on their selfish motives and not the general interest of the people. And worst still, the gullible citizen always tribalise politics believing that their own person would come through for them. Many citizens believe that southern leaders or northern leaders is what Nigeria needs, but the writer mocked this notion through Mallam Haruna in the novel.

"Northern leaders, southern leaders, what good have they done the country?"

In an interview with UbuntuFm, the author commented,

"The moment an Igbo man and an Hausa man and a Yoruba man get into power,

they speak a new language, the language of those in power which excludes those

being governed. When we realise this, we will have a better understanding of

which direction to channel our anger"

Here, we see the ridiculing of such notion because in actual sense, no leader regardless of their geographical location has actually made significant impact in the state of the country. So, the writer is trying to implore citizens to forget about a southern or Northerner leader to come through for them in changing the situation of things because the realm of power has no regard for tribes and regions. In that realm, all politicians are the same. In the writer's interview, he made it so glaring that all politicians speak a language that exclude citizens, but which they understand regardless of their tribe, hence, it is the language of power.

4.1.2.5 Corruption.

This was given great emphasis in the novel. The author satirises the mode of election in Nigeria; its adulteration and invalidity in determining who emerges or not. Strong ridicule is employed in achieving this when Binta pledged support for the presidential candidate. In satirizing the general elections in Nigeria, the author shows that the involvement of citizens through voting has absolutely nothing to do with the final results or outcomes of the election. Although, the people are mobilized to vote for political parties, it is just to fulfil all formalities because when it comes to election results, the top government officials, especially from electoral committee and the ruling parties are the one with the final say and decision.

The electoral officers that are supposed to be at the helm of affair and to be totally unbiased and selfless are the most corrupt individuals. The voting process is more or less like a mere formality or a game as it has proven to be an invalid factor in any electioneering procedure. It is this state that corruption takes upper hand and that is after general elections, the opposition parties (the loser) always rant about the election not being free and fair and they insinuate that the ruling party used money to bribe their ways.

"But, we the people are behind him and we are going to make sure

he wins."

"Don't delude yourself, Hajiya, we all know how elections are held

here. You vote, they announce whomever they want to announce

as winners. You can go jump in the well if you don't like it. Nobody

gives a damn really" Pg. 129

The electoral committee always neglect their duties in upholding integrity and they always sell their people for huge amount of money and leave them to their fate for the next four years. It is important to note that any candidate that 'buys' his/ her mandate into any political position or office would embezzle a lot of money to make up for the 'bills' he had incur. This always began the era of suffering for the people.

One can boldly say that the lackadaisical attitude towards the people emanates from the fact that political leaders are aware that it was not the citizen's vote that got them in, but their resources. Hence, they have little or no sympathy for the citizens.

The writer definitely is not happy with the corruption in the electioneering process. Citizen's votes do not matter but leaders are appointed out of selfish interests of the leaders in power. This was ridiculed as a way of evoking reformation in the electoral board.

Another area of emphasis in the book was the preposterous notion that a single man with the right intentions can eradicate corruption in a country like Nigeria. Instead, he proposes a collective reformation that will include virtually every citizen.

"...there's an honest man at the electoral commission. He will

make sure elections are free and fair" Pg. 130

"What can one man do against a corrupt system?"

A single honest man in the middle of corrupt officials can barely invoke change because of the severe opposition, attacks, threats that such will face. His/her supposed good intentions and mindset will quiver at a point in time. If care is not taken, he might be assassinated, killed or even implicated as the case may be. Honesty in one man's hand is not a sufficient weapon to restructure a corrupt system like the electoral commission, but all hands must be on deck in order to effect a flawless system.

In the novel, we see various shades of corruption even amidst the law enforcement agencies. It is quite ironical that these officers who are expected to uphold justice, are confidently doing exact opposite and will even demand, 'protection fee' which is not written in the constitution. As a matter of fact, Reza's refusal to pay this fee led the officials to physically harass and humiliate Reza's boys and they even made way with Reza's goods (weed) which was later sold to some guys at the junction.

Weed is not legalised in Nigeria and youth/people who sell it, do so with utmost secrecy but because police officers have been collecting protection fee, they can't take proper action. At a point, Reza said the previous officer cooperated with him and never bothered their boys. It is so obvious that

instead of proper action to be effected and the fight against the consumption of local drugs, police officers would rather collect whatever is available and look the other way and neglect their primary duty of upholding justice and truth in the society.

"This is a small matter. If you had been paying the protection fee,

None of this would have happened. When your boys started fighting

and trying to kill each other, we would have gone and settled the matter

No need for all this, eh"

He later named his price and collected what could be described as bribe. The ridicule here is that, after collecting the money from Reza, he no longer commands respect as he ought to.

4.1.2.6 Deception

It is a known fact that politicians are naturally deceptive. In the political realm, importance is given to their families, interests and themselves above anything else as already established in this essay. We see the raw manifestation of this when Reza brought the idea of going back to school before Senator Buba, his ambition was not encouraged by the Senator telling sad tales of graduates who had no jobs and encourage him to continue his weed business. But, ironically, when his son, Hamza was concerned, he wanted the best for him and had different opinion.

"...he just finished his first degree. I want him to go for his

Masters immediately"

If he truly has good intentions for Reza, he would have set him up for good with a proper and decent business but because he wanted the services of Reza in handling his dirty business and behind the scene engagements, Reza to him is better than 'unemployed graduates'. For someone who knows the end-result of education is unemployment, he should be non-challant about it but It is so shocking that someone with best ideas for his children could actually discourage others.

"...too many people these days going to all sorts of school and there

are no jobs for them to do. "

"You're doing better than them who spent all those years in school, all.

that money gone, all that time wasted. For what? That is why I think

young people like you who are entrepreneurs, who have business

acumen, should not waste your lives chasing illusions..."

But when his son was concerned, entrepreneurship was not welcomed. This goes to say that politicians have no genuine interest in other people's affair. Hypocrisy and deception of political leaders cannot be denied as it stinks all through. How could one ask someone else not to go to school because of unemployment and he is making ways for his own? It goes to say that political leaders have no genuine love for their merchants that work for them. It is more saddening that Reza was used as a political thug and the senator knew that him going to school would project to him knowledge that would enlighten him and maybe free him from his shackles of ignorance and he might decide not to work for him again. That was the main motive of the senator discouraging Reza and it is not borne out of genuine love. It is just not in line with his political agenda and selfish interests as well.

4.1.2.7 Misplaced Loyalty

Anyone who is loyal to politicians has his or her loyalty misplaced because they do not appreciate loyalty. In the novel, we see some obvious instances where loyalty to a particular political leader was not acknowledged.

"...politics is like chess. You move your pieces randomly sometimes.

Other times, you use your pawns to hold down aspects of play. And,

sometimes, you sacrifice the pawns. But you always keep your eye

on the big picture. There is a bigger picture here..." Pg. 288

Hence, loyalty or not, if an individual is not in the big picture, he or she might be sacrificed to keep the overall motive unshaken. In politics, the big picture will always prevail. Reza served the senator with every fibre of his being but when the need arises, he had to be sacrificed. Politicians can reward loyalty momentarily but the second such individual becomes a threat, he or she has to die. Reza served the senator well, even the senator admitted it but because he knows too much about his dirty engagements, he had to be killed.

"...like I said the first time we spoke on phone, there are no permanent

friends in politics but permanent interest" Pg.34

"Even Reza sir? Considering you have a special relationship with him?"

"He is the priority. He must never be allowed to talk. If you can ensure

that never happens. I will make sure you are set up for good"

Reza's years of loyalty and obedience to Senator Buba didn't even matter because he was no longer an asset, rather he had become a liability. Senator Buba never doubted the loyalty of Reza but just couldn't keep him alive because he had performed some dirty errands which need to be kept silenced and unexposed. As a matter of fact, Reza ate with the senator in his bedroom. This is to show the level of intimacy between them has nothing to do with the game called politics. The only thing that must be preserved is their own, anything else can die or be sacrificed to attain anything desired. That is why most political leaders secure their families abroad to fight the dirty game here without mercy. It is highly undiscerning for youths to pledge their support for politicians because they mean so little to them and they can be used as a ladder for attaining the next level without flinching a bit.

4.1.2.8 Religious Satire

As minute as this could be in the novel, it is necessary for our present time. The writer satirizes the harsh and outright condemnation of fanatics who had seeing believers to feel inferior. Binta went for Madrasa teaching, even after the news had gone round that she was having an affair with Reza. Unfortunately, what she got at the Madrasa was not what she expected.

Midway into the teaching, her colleagues started insinuating a lot of things which made her to feel terrible.

"What is that God-awful smell?"

"It's the smell of Zina, wallahi. I could perceive it anywhere!

There's a fornicator in this class"

Following that statement, Ladidi who commented spat on the floor and as if planned, the pregnant young bride that was in class with them, rushed out to throw up. All these were heavily criticised and are obviously not the best way to bring an erring believer back to the right path. Satire is employed to criticise the way Binta was treated amidst her brethren of the same faith because of a deviation from their religious doctrines and precepts.

In addition to that, the writer also satirises the notion that evil is strictly associated with a particular religion. Many citizens believe that a particular religion is synonymous with killings, bombings and massacres but this was clearly refuted.

"My husband , God rest his soul was killed by some Christian boys

he employed. They were people he called by their birth names and

did business with. My sister's husband and her son were hacked

to death by their christian neighbours because a woman urged them to.

But my sister and her daughters were saved from being raped and

murdered by a Christian woman whose husband had been killed

by some Muslim youths" Pg.27

The supposition of the above is that all human beings whether Christians or Muslims are liable to commit murder based on primordial objectives. The Jos religious crisis resulted in the brutal loss of lives of Christians and Muslims. In the novel, the writer is interested in reflecting the pains and trauma it inflicted on his sentiments, executing a single story agenda where Muslims are portrayed as victims and Christians as predators. He shows that evil is not a preserve of a single ethnic group or religion. This purports that hate and love is a shared human experience.

Following this brief explanation from Binta it is obvious that no religion is naturally associated with evil. It is the inherent evil of humanity that takes cover from religion.

V. CONCLUSION

In this essay, we have been able to present in a more glaring terms, motive behind the writing of the novel, *Season Of Crimson Blossoms*, which is to emphasise and expose everything destroying a seemingly upright society, using satire as a lens.

Abubakar Adams Ibrahim has said in one of his interview with UbuntuFm,

"...writers have a great role to play in the political and social sphere

across the continent both as writers and citizens. At the same time,

we must not forget that there is so much more that writing can

accomplish and it is fine if some writers don't feel like championing

causes and it is fine if they choose to."

<https://mediumcom/@UbuntuFm/interview-w-abubakar-adam-ibrahim-writer-journalist-from-nigeria-93f75939645a>

From the excerpts above, the author confirmed the claims of critics that his novel was produced out of a burning desire to champion causes. These causes by implication are practices that have affected not just the northern aspects of

Nigeria but the country as a whole and his book is basically an exposé on that.

Season of Crimson Blossoms explores in no small measure the barbaric culture of silence that has been super-imposed on Northern women. The novel is laced with many thought-provoking scenarios which are dominant in the Northern region of Nigeria. We see the manifestation of Kunya -the social modesty that disallows a woman to acknowledge her first child- and why it should be avoided. Also, the culture of silence of women in the Northern community and the havoc it has wrecked. It is quite possible that Binta's controversial affair with Reza might have been avoided if her husband had respected her pleas but because her sexual desires were not met despite taking actions to effect that.

The selfish interests and desires of our political leaders have been established in various shades in this essay. We see how the big picture or main focus always take precedence over anyone working with them, we see the evils and heartlessness of political leaders towards their citizens. It was also established that one man cannot effect change in a corrupt system of governance like Nigeria because it has to be collective and not an individual adventure. Through this, we see that the author is beckoning on all and sundry to all and sundry to come together and fight the war of corruption which has crippled and is still crippling the growth and development of Nigeria as a whole. Implied in the novel and the essay is the fact that one man can do nothing to change the state of Nigeria.

Through this essay, the northern society has been thoroughly scrutinized and the barbaric traditional stereotypes have been exposed with a view to effect restructuring and reformation.

In an interview with Elizabeth Olaoye, Abubakar Adams Ibrahim speaks,

"This is not about the unconscious mind of the Hausa people. This is

about the prevalence of these practices across ethnic and religious lines

on the continent..."

www.africabooklink.com/an-interview-with-abubakar-adams-ibrahim-by-elizabeth-olaoye/.

Hence, *Season of Crimson Blossoms* is not just an exploration of the Northern society but any society that indulges on these practices. The author uses his novel to communicate to thousands of community where such traditional stereotypes are being perpetuated.

This essay also reveals some socio-cultural practices in Northern society which are long overdue for restructuring and change. It is quite refreshing that a Northerner was

speaking up on these practices with a clear cut, unbiased representation of the region because should it have been a Non-Northerner who writes about these barbaric traditions, many would consider it as an insult to their tradition. Hence, the fact that the author is a Northerner makes his quest for change a feasible one because in a way or the other, the practices must have affected him.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Abubakar Adams Ibrahim deserves to be commended for a terrific job done in his novel, *Season of Crimson Blossoms* and for leaving a wonderful legacy for upcoming fiction writers. However, in the novel, it was observed that there was no glossary section for the Hausa words that laced the book which makes it a bit difficult for Non-Northerner to comprehend some words but overall, the meaning without the interpretation of the Hausa words were still intact.

Fiction writers should endeavour to speak to their societal's problem and not lay much emphasis on the aesthetic aspect of their society or rather strike a balance between the two but it is important to note that relevance in the literary world especially in Nigeria can only be achieved through championing a social cause. I daresay that it's because of the various social causes that were demonstrated in *Season of Crimson Blossoms* made it possible for it to have clinched the 2016 awarded for NLGN. Upcoming writers should speak to their society in order to effect rapid improvement.

In a nutshell, literature has once again proven its refractive power in the novel by first reflecting the various ills and proffering a way out.

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